



# CITY OF HOUSTON NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBER PETER BROWN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COUNCIL MEMBER PETER BROWN SUPPORTS NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS**

When a public institution loses the trust of the people it serves, it loses its reason for being. Houston Independent School District (HISD) knows that public schools are about reaching and teaching children first, rather than “economies of scale” and “efficient administration.” Particularly at the elementary school level, there is a strong case that “smaller” is better, much better – for pupils, teachers, parents, and their neighborhoods. “Smaller” works for children and neighborhoods – higher attendance rates, less busing, more parental and community involvement, less stress for teachers and administrators, all attributable to a more humane and personalized environment. Larger, impersonal schools, designed for “control,” are ready-made for discipline problems, absentee parents, gangs and high drop-out rates. Every school teacher knows this well.

As an At-Large City Council Member and experienced parent, I am deeply concerned about our at-risk neighborhoods and the loss of our kids to boredom, gangs and drugs. I vigorously support the parents and teachers of Wharton Elementary School, and the families who share an emotional bond with their neighborhood school - in some cases a bond that spans three generations. Parents in Clinton Park, Brock Elementary in First Ward, Turner in Third Ward, Dogan in Fifth Ward, and R.L. Stevenson in Cottage Grove should be concerned and opposed to these school closings.

There is another serious concern. The City of Houston, under Mayor White’s leadership, is investing tens of millions of taxpayer dollars each year to restore our ailing neighborhoods. Families are moving back and reclaiming once blighted areas. The sudden closing of a local school seriously compromises these efforts. Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of the City; neighborhood elementary schools are the bedrock institutions essential to authentic neighborhood life. This is the American way.

The City needs a creative partnership with HISD to revitalize large areas of the City, but thus far, HISD is going at it alone. I urge Superintendent Saavedra and his Board to think outside the box, to work with our Mayor and City Council, to find ways for smaller, traditional neighborhood schools to flourish. To our children, who are our future, we owe this extra measure of civic devotion.

*Peter Brown is a third-generation Houstonian, a nationally recognized architect and urban planner, serving his second term in At-Large Position 1 on Houston City Council. He welcomes your comments at [atlarge1@cityofhouston.net](mailto:atlarge1@cityofhouston.net).*

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